

NOT VOTING—16

Braun	Inhofe	Shaheen
Brown	Marshall	Tillis
Cassidy	Moran	Van Hollen
Cramer	Portman	Young
Ernst	Rosen	
Hassan	Rounds	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). On this vote, the yeas are 48, the nays are 36.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Stephanie Dawkins Davis, of Michigan, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEATH OF SHIREEN ABU AKLEH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I join Secretary Blinken in calling for a thorough, impartial investigation of the tragic death of widely respected Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, in the Jenin refugee camp on May 4. According to press reports, Israel has already launched an investigation. Some Members of Congress have called for the FBI to be involved. I echo that recommendation. The investigation will also require the participation of Palestinian authorities. Too often, shootings of unarmed civilians in the occupied territories have gone unpunished. This must not be one of those cases.

In addition, Israeli authorities must hold accountable those who were responsible for, and participated in, the chaos that erupted during Ms. Abu Akleh's funeral procession, when Israeli police beat mourners with batons, including the pallbearers, causing them to momentarily drop one end of the casket. The explanation provided by Israeli police officials, that mourners had been chanting nationalist slogans and waving Palestinian flags, in no way justifies their lack of judgment, disrespect, and use of unnecessary force in what should have been a solemn, peaceful procession deserving of their protection.

ALAA ABDEL FATTAH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last month, dozens of Egyptian political

prisoners, including journalists, opposition activists, and lawmakers, were released from pretrial detention—the second group since July last year. These individuals had been behind bars on charges of spreading fake news and collaborating with a terrorist organization, accusations that are frequently used to silence critics of the al Sisi government.

These releases were welcome news, but thousands of other opposition figures remain behind bars for acts of free speech and association that are not crimes under international law. One of those is Alaa Abdel Fattah, a blogger, software developer, and political activist who is also a British citizen, who has already spent years in prison. He is now reportedly in his 6th week of a hunger strike to protest the inhumane conditions he and other prisoners are forced to endure.

Mr. Abdel Fattah was arrested in September 2019, along with his lawyer, Mohamed El Bager, while on a 5-year probation period after his conviction for the non-crime of spreading “fake news,” requiring him to spend 12 hours of each day at a police station. He had been released only 6 months earlier after spending 4 years behind bars.

He received a 5-year sentence last December after spending more than 2 years in pre-trial detention. He has reportedly been denied access to reading and writing material and has not been exposed to sunlight in months. Visitation with a single family member is limited to a mere 20 minutes per month.

The Egyptian Government has pointed to the lifting of the longstanding emergency law in October and the release of a new human rights strategy as evidence of progress. Compared to nothing, that is arguably true. But as long as people like Mr. Abdel Fattah are denied due process and treated in ways reminiscent of the Middle Ages, it is hard to take seriously Egypt's new “human rights strategy.”

Egypt is an important ally of the United States. We share a common interest in a peaceful Middle East. But on human rights we have profound differences. I urge the Egyptian authorities to match their words with actions. A serious human rights strategy would include repealing laws that are used to criminalize speech and association, real consequences for ignoring maximum limits on pre-trial detention, and protections of the rights of prisoners. A good first step would be the immediate release of Mr. Abdel Fattah, who never should have been arrested in the first place.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, as my colleagues know, last weekend, I experienced a minor stroke in the form of a small venous tear at the back of

my head and, out of an abundance of caution, have been following my doctor's advice to remain under observation and rest for a few days. I am grateful for the warm wishes I have received from my colleagues and constituents from across Maryland and the excellent care of the medical team at George Washington University Hospital. Following my doctor's orders, I'll begin to ease back into my schedule.

Had I been present to vote today, I would have voted in favor of the critical package of aid for Ukraine. The people of Ukraine continue to stand up to Vladimir Putin's unprovoked attack, and today's aid package will deliver military and humanitarian aid to strengthen their forces and care for refugees. There was no reason to delay this crucial support, and I am glad it has finally passed.

I would have also voted in support of today's bill to deliver much-needed relief to restaurants and small businesses in Maryland and across the country who are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. I hear regularly from these businesses, who have worked hard to stay afloat and continue to struggle through no fault of their own. America's restaurants are at the center of their communities, and we must support them through this unprecedented time. I am disappointed that many of my Republican colleagues voted against proceeding today, and we once again saw the damage of the filibuster to progress for the American people. I will continue to work to persuade my colleagues of the urgency of this support.

I look forward to returning soon to work alongside you all for the people of my great State of Maryland.●

SMALL BUSINESS COVID RELIEF ACT

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, restaurants in Georgia have been among the small businesses worst hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and I am working every day to help them recover and thrive. Today, I voted that the Senate should proceed to debate S. 4008, the Small Business COVID Relief Act, legislation intended to help businesses impacted by COVID-19, including small, independent restaurants that were unable previously to access emergency relief via the Restaurant Revitalization Fund.

However, should the Senate proceed to debate this measure, as I voted today that we should, the bill should be amended such that it is well targeted and more fiscally responsible in order to earn my support in a vote on final passage. While I support this legislation's aims—helping small businesses, especially small and independent restaurants—and while I believe we should proceed to debate it, I would oppose it in its present form should such modifications not be adopted.

I appreciate the support of the bill's lead sponsor, Senator CARDIN, who has

committed to work with me to ensure this bill is tailored to help the small, independent neighborhood restaurants most in need of help in a fiscally responsible way.

CONFIRMATION OF BARBARA A. LEAF

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise in support of Ambassador Barbara Leaf to be Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

It has been almost 400 days since President Biden announced this nomination to one of the most critical regions in the world when it comes to U.S. foreign policy interests. It is unconscionable that the post has remained vacant for so long.

Since her hearing at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the region has only become more complicated. Libya has been stuck in a stalemate since failed elections. In Tunisia, the President sacked the Prime Minister and suspended Parliament in a coup against democratically elected representatives. ISIS remains active in Syria, attacking a prison with guns and car bombs to free extremists earlier this year. A fragile ceasefire in Yemen followed blatant attacks on the UAE and Saudi Arabia by Iranian-backed Houthis using drones and missiles. Our staunch ally Israel is fending off rocket attacks. Iran is engaging in brinksmanship as negotiations drag on over its nuclear program, which has the potential to transform the balance of power in the region. And the Russian war against Ukraine has set off a major global food security crisis across Africa and the Middle East, adding to an already strained humanitarian situation in parts of the region.

Meanwhile, there are opportunities to seize. Our diplomacy in the Negev Summit process is as important as ever. Elections in Lebanon, government formation in Iraq—they are all developments that require deft American diplomacy.

These are some of the most important issues we confront in American foreign policy. We must have our A-team in place to advance American leadership and values. And no one is better suited for this job than Barbara Leaf, a dedicated public servant who devoted her career to the Foreign Service.

She has served as our Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Arabian Peninsula in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. She directed the critical Basrah U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Team on the ground in Iraq, and she was the Department's first Director of the Office of Iranian Affairs. She speaks Arabic, French, Italian, and Serbo-Croatian.

She currently works as the Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Middle East and North Africa Affairs on the National Security Council. She is up to speed and ready

to hit the ground running as Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

The Senate's failure to confirm Ambassador Leaf earlier left a critical post vacant and the United States without a strong and powerful advocate for our Nation's interests across the Middle East and around the world. It is long past time for Ambassador Leaf to be in her Senate-confirmed role advancing our interests. I am pleased that Assistant Secretary Leaf can now begin to tackle the many challenges that await her.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmations of Executive Calendar No. 907, S. Lane Tucker, of Alaska, to be United States Attorney for the District of Alaska or the term of four years; Executive Calendar No. 916, Rachelle L. Crowe, of Illinois, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois for the term of four years; Executive Calendar No. 917, Jesse A. Laslovich, of Montana, to be United States Attorney for the District of Montana for the term of four years; Executive Calendar No. 918, Alexander M.M. Uballez, of New Mexico, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico for the term of four years.

RECOGNIZING THE GLOBAL MEDICAL RESPONSE STARS OF LIFE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, in honor of EMS Week, I rise to recognize the 57 Global Medical Response Stars of Life award recipients for 2020 through 2022.

Heroic acts by EMS professionals happen every day across the globe. In the State of Missouri, Global Medical Response has two ground ambulance operations and 12 air ambulance operations stationed strategically to best support our rural communities. Every day, these professionals are called upon, but two instances come to mind that truly illustrate their dedication.

In November of 2020, the air evac lifeteam flight crew—Flight Nurse Lisa Pittman, Flight Paramedic Rayna Periman, and Pilot Randy Varady—out of Perryville were called to action and, within minutes, were at the bedside of a senior diagnosed with an abdominal aortic aneurysm. When time mattered most, this care team made the difference in saving a life.

In February 2021, a high school student driving home from football practice was broadsided by a speeding semitruck. This time, Flight Paramedic Eric Schowe and Flight Nurse Stephanie McMillan were ready at a moment's notice to provide life sustaining care on board the EMS helicopter to help this student beat the odds.

Each year, the American Ambulance Association—AAA—honors and celebrates the most distinguished of Emer-

gency Medical Services professionals for their acts of service, dedication to their communities, and commitment to excellence through the Stars of Life program. Global Medical Response, a member of the AAA and the world's largest provider of emergent and non-emergent medical transportation and healthcare services, recognizes an elite group of individuals, ranging from emergency medical technicians and paramedics, to fire service professionals, nurses, dispatch specialists, and highly-skilled aviators.

To be a Stars of Life award recipient means to go above and beyond the call of duty. It means being ready to help a stranger, both on the ground and in the air with the care they need at that moment. It means always doing what is right for the patient, in every circumstance. To be a Star means to show compassion in the most difficult and humbling moments of a person's life. For some, it means making the ultimate sacrifice.

It is important to remember the ones who are no longer with us but left an indelible mark of excellence on the world. May we never forget their heroism, acts of kindness, and unselfish sacrifice that not only made a difference to the people they helped, but also a lasting impression on the entire Emergency Medical Services community. To their families and dearest loved ones, may you feel peace in knowing their lives will never be forgotten.

The Global Medical Response Stars of Life award recipients and all members of the Emergency Medical Services community at large are a shining light in our post-pandemic world and must be recognized as so. As such, I respectfully request that each of them be included in today's record, to honor their immense contributions and unwavering loyalty to their community while providing care to the world at a moment's notice.

Lauryn Allgood, Flight Nurse of Opelousas, LA

Brad Andrews, EMT of Tucson, AZ
Olga Borozinski, Flight Nurse of Las Vegas, NV

Loretta Burton, Paramedic of Youngstown, OH

Larry Cardwell, Flight Paramedic of Sacramento, CA

Destiny Carter, Paramedic of Colorado Springs, CO

Luke Combs, Pilot of Rosebud, SD
Mathew Cox, Paramedic of Stockton, CA
Amira Drakes, EMT of Trinidad & Tobago
Ismael Esparza, Paramedic of Palm Springs, CA

Peter Gauna, EMT of Stafford, AZ
Holly Griswold, Operations Supervisor of Cochise County, AZ

Scott Hedrick, Paramedic of Evansville, IN
Clifford Jacks, Paramedic of Concord, CA
Adam Martin, Paramedic of Buffalo, NY
Bryan McKeon, Paramedic of Monterey, CA

Will Moser, Regional Manager of Clinical Practices of Juneau, AK
Diana Priego, Flight Nurse of Sacramento, CA

Mathew Scott, Base Pilot Supervisor of Eagle Pass, TX
Mary Springer, LMS National Administrator of North Charleston, SC